THE

GLORIES OF THE GOSPEL

EXEMPLIFIED:

AND ITS

NATURE AND PROPERTIES, | DOCTRINES, AND PREACHERS,

CONSIDERED and ADJUSTED;

IN THREE DISCOURSES,

PREACHED IN

LITTLE ALIE-STREET, GOODMAN's-FIELDS,

On Lord's Days, *July* 29, *Aug.* 5 and 12, 1792,

By *WILLIAM DOWARS.*

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CHURCH UNDER HIS CARE.

Taken in Short-Hand by WILLIAM DALTON.

GALATIANS I. 8.

But though we, or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

II. CORINTHIANS IV. 3.

But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.

I. THESSALONIANS I. 5.

For our Gospel came not unto you in Word only, but also in Power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much Assurance, as ye know what Manner of Men we were among you for your Sake.

LONDON,

Printed by J. SKIRVEN, for the AUTHOR,

And sold at the Meeting-House, Little Alie-Street, Goodman's-Fields; at the Rev. Mr. C. FLEMING's Academy, near Old-Ford, Middlesex; at Mr. HIGGINS's, No. 49, Shoe-Lane, Holborn; Mr. GOODING's, No. 2, Stewart-Street, Spital-fields; and at Mr. DALTON's, No. 2, Naval-Row, Black-wall.

1792.

BRITISH MUSEUM

DISCOURSE I.

ACTS xiv. 7.

And there they preached the Goſpel.

THE Apoſtles of our bleſſed Lord and Redeemer found themſelves neceſſitated at this time to take the advice he had given them long before, *that if they were perſecuted in one city, to flee to another*; which they did. Before they came to Lycaonia, they preached the goſpel with ſucceſs at Iconium, but ſoon found that place too hot for them, and themſelves under the neceſſity of haſtening away, as a particular perſecution aroſe, and the intention of the rulers and others was to ſtone them; but they being aware of it, fled unto Lyſtra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region round about; and then follows the words of our

text; *and there they preached the goſpel.* In which words obſerve, firſt, the quinteſſence, beauty, and ſubject-matter of the text, the Goſpel; and this indeed is the beauty of all the written word of God; ſecondly, obſerve the perſons intended that were concerned in publiſhing this goſpel, Paul and Barnabas; they preached it; hence we ſee they were not Chriſtian readers; the word of God makes a particular diſtinction betwixt reading, preaching, and prating; they are things clearly ſpoken of in the ſacred oracles; thirdly, the places ſpoken of in the context, where they preached the goſpel, at Lyſtra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about; there they preached the goſpel.

In ſpeaking to theſe words, we purpoſe, as enabled,

I. To conſider what the goſpel is;

II. Shew you what it is to preach the goſpel;

III. Conſider under what characters Paul and Barnabas preached the goſpel.

Firſt, we are to conſider what the goſpel is; and the goſpel is, either, 1ſt, a revelation and free flow of God's grace and mercy, through Chriſt, to ſinners, without any condition

dition whatever; or, 2dly, the goſpel is good news and glad tidings to ſinners; or, 3dly, the goſpel is the good-will of God manifeſted and diſplayed through Chriſt to ſinners; or, 4thly, the goſpel is a joyful ſound of life and ſalvation to ſinners through Chriſt; or, 5thly, the goſpel is the promiſe of eternal life made to Chriſt on the behalf of others; or, 6thly, the goſpel is the living word of truth.

And the goſpel is either, 1ſt, a revelation and free flow of God's grace and mercy, through Chriſt, to ſinners, without any conditions whatever: there are no conditions in the goſpel of any kind relating to man; the goſpel holds forth none; it is a free flow of God's love and mercy manifeſted through Chriſt; and as ſoon as gracious ſouls are acquainted, by the ſpirit of God, of their intereſt in Chriſt, they have appetites given them, as well as a taſte, for the goſpel; they have it as freely as perſons invited to the ordinances of the goſpel, ſignified by thirſty ſouls; which character diſtinguiſhes God's people from others, as expreſſed by the prophet (*a*): *Ho, every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money,*

(*a*) Iſaiah lv. 1.

come

come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price. So the goſpel is as free of all conditions whatever, without money, and without price.

There are ſome good men, and men of good parts and abilities, and great learning, that have been greatly miſtaken in this; they have declared that faith, and repentance, and ſincere obedience, are terms and conditions of the goſpel. What is this but to enervate the goſpel, and to turn the goſpel into law, and to act very diſingenuouſly, and highly to reflect on the Lord Jeſus, who performed every condition that the covenant of works required? How then can the free flow of God's love and mercy to ſinners, through Chriſt, have any conditions annexed therewith to be performed by creatures? And by doing this, to turn the goſpel into law, is to do injury to our text, and the goſpel in general; inaſmuch as the goſpel is as rich a diſplay of the love of God to ſinners, through Chriſt, as can be conceived, and not to be appropriated to any doing or work of creatures, upon any account whatever. There are not, there cannot be, any conditions in the goſpel.

goſpel. Faith is none; it is the gift of God(*a*); therefore faith can be no condition: and repentance is the gift of an exalted Saviour; therefore no condition(*b*). This we maintain, and contend for, as goſpel doctrine, and as agreeable to the nature of the covenant of grace; and, by the authority of the goſpel, that it is without any condition; and is a free flow of love diſplayed through Chriſt to ſinners: and the chief of ſinners receive this bleſſing from the Lord(*c*). And the Apoſtle, ſpeaking of this amazing love and mercy of God, tells us(*d*), *But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in ſins, hath quickened us together with Chriſt; by grace ye are ſaved.* Beſides, if there were any conditions in the goſpel, it muſt be ſuppoſed that perſons are capable of performing thoſe conditions, or they are not. If they are, they do ſomething which is not in the power of fallen creatures, as in themſelves conſidered, to do. Faith, repentance, holy obedience, and what is called pre-requiſites, to be performed by man's own ability, is ſome-

(*a*) Epheſ. ii. 8. (*b*) Acts v. 31.
(*c*) 1 Tim. i. 15. (*d*) Epheſ. ii. 4, 5.

thing

thing very amazing; and our Lord tells us, *without him we can do nothing* (*a*). Can a man of himſelf repent? It might as well be ſaid a man can regenerate himſelf, which we know is impoſſible, and denied to be of the will of man (*b*). The Apoſtle ſpeaks different language in all his writings, and greatly exalts and admires the goſpel, of which he thus ſpeaks (*c*): *According to the glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God, which was committed to my truſt*: theſe things he preached, and thoſe grand and ſublime truths which are cloſely connected with the goſpel.

Or, 2dly, The goſpel is good news and glad tidings to ſinners; the beſt news that ever reached the ears or impreſſed the hearts of creatures; of polluted, guilty, ſinful creatures; creatures that, in themſelves, are wretched, miſerable, hopeleſs, loſt, and undone: 'tis not good news unto every individual of mankind, nor to any man that is whole and needs not the phyſician; not good news, in a goſpel ſenſe, to men that are dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, that never ſaw their need of Chriſt (*d*), that never made application to

(*a*) John xv. 5.
(*b*) John i. 13.
(*c*) 1 Tim. i. 11.
(*d*) Matt. ix. 12.

him,

him, that never had nor knew any thing of the truth of the power of the goſpel in their ſouls; but 'tis good news to ſome individuals of mankind, even to all ſuch who have learned the way of ſalvation by Chriſt, and found him to be precious, as is the ſaying of the wiſe man (*a*): *as cold waters to a thirſty ſoul, ſo is good news from a far country.* The goſpel is good news from Heaven, that far country, that heavenly Canaan: all believers in Chriſt prize this, and bleſs God for his everlaſting love that planned, and fixed the plan of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt; and they acknowledge this at the throne of grace with thankfulneſs. That was good news of the incarnation of Chriſt, when the Angel appeared to the ſhepherds, at the ſight of which they were terrified; (*b*) *And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord ſhone round about them, and they were ſore afraid; and the angel ſaid unto them, fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to all people.* Not unto every individual is the goſpel good news and glad tidings, but unto per-

(*a*) Prov. xxv. 25. (*b*) Luke ii. 9, 10.

ſons that have ſeen they muſt drop into hell and periſh for ever without an intereſt in Chriſt. It is the goſpel that gives us this account; the goſpel declares theſe things clearly; that ſets theſe things before the eyes and underſtandings of ſouls enlightened by the ſpirit of God.

Or, 3dly, The goſpel is the good-will of God diſplayed through Chriſt to ſinners. Owing to this good-will, and that only, there is any goſpel in the world: owing to this good-will, there are any perſons quickened and made alive by grace; that there are any that underſtand the goſpel, and the myſteries of it; and it is owing to this good-will of God the apoſtle aſcribes the whole of ſalvation(*a*): *Having made known unto us the myſtery of his will, according to his good pleaſure, which he hath purpoſed in himſelf.* Nothing could influence him to do what he hath done for his people in eternity, and in time; the ſecuring of all ſpiritual bleſſings for them, his elect, entirely reſts upon this cauſe, his purpoſe, and good-will, and pleaſure, as diſplayed through Chriſt, and not on any thing foreſeen in them, or ſhould be

(*a*) Epheſ. i. 9.

done

done by them: there is ſuch a ſhine of this in the goſpel, that cannot but be embraced and ſpoken well of by the people of God, when they have taſted the Lord is gracious; and what a diſplay of this does the apoſtle exhibit to our view, when he aſſures us(*a*), *So, then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that ſheweth mercy:* and all this muſt be reſolved into the ſovereign good-will and pleaſure of God, where it will ever remain; and this his determined will and pleaſure is manifeſted through the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and through him believers enjoy the benefit now, and they have a particular taſte given them, and an underſtanding to know theſe things.

Or, 4thly, The goſpel is a joyful ſound of life and ſalvation through Chriſt to ſinners; and it is a moſt joyful ſound to ſome; and if it were not ſounded in this kingdom, what a wretched kingdom would it be! 'Tis bad enough as it is, though we enjoy this ſo great a bleſſing; and it will be ſounded in a clearer manner hereafter than it is now: may the time be haſtened! What would our nation

(*a*) Romans ix. 16.

be, at leaſt in the account of the people of God, and churches of Chriſt, was it not for the goſpel? Why, it would bear ſome reſemblance to a dark barren wilderneſs, or like that melancholy periphraſe which is given of hell, that is a place of utter darkneſs. The goſpel is a joyful ſound, but not to every individual; 'tis joyful to thoſe that have been enlightened by the ſpirit of God, and brought to Chriſt; that have been enabled to venture their ſalvation in his hands; that have been wrought upon by the ſpirit of Chriſt, and have committed their ſouls into the hands of Chriſt, as all truly regenerate perſons do, and that by ſupernatural help. Man, by nature, and as a depraved creature, has no reliſh for the goſpel of the grace of God, this joyful ſound. 'Tis true, ſome there are, and there will be found others, though but few, comparatively, who enjoy this divine bleſſing and favour. Such are happy ſouls indeed! Happy is the people that is in ſuch a caſe (*a*); and, as the Pſalmiſt expreſſes it (*b*), *bleſſed is the people that know the joyful ſound; they ſhall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance:* and this light

(*a*) Pſalm cxliv. 15. (*b*) Pſalm lxxxix. 15.

of

of God's countenance the ſaints are favoured with at ſome particular times and ſeaſons; and nothing yields them ſuch ſolid pleaſure and delight as it does; and if the people of God did always enjoy this favour, which is ſo divine and tranſporting, they would bear a greater reſemblance to the glorious and bleſſed inhabitants of the heavenly world, who always enjoy it. And this joyful ſound we are ſpeeking of, when underſtood, comes with evidence and demonſtration. When Philip carried the goſpel into Samaria, it was a joyful ſound then; for the text ſays(*a*), *and there was great joy in that city;* and conſequently muſt cauſe great joy, delight. and pleaſure; as 'tis a ſound of life and ſalvation by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, without any conditions whatever; and, to all thoſe that have a ſpiritual acquaintance therewith, to be intereſted in this, to be made acquainted with this, to have the witneſs of the Spirit of intereſt in this, are things that demand our greateſt regard and thankfulneſs; and the redeemed of the Lord will be ſounding out this, in the higheſt notes and ſtrains of praiſe, in the heavenly ſtate. The ſound of this ſal-

(*a*) Acts viii. 8.

vation

vation of ſinners, in themſelves loſt, ruined, and undone, cauſes preſent wonder; and when the goſpel ſhall be ſpread and promulgated hereafter, this joyful ſound of life and ſalvation will be more known, approved of, digeſted, and received; and believers will ſpeak fluently of God's love in Chriſt; *for God ſo loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten ſon, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting life* (*a*); everlaſting life to be enjoyed without labouring or toiling for, as it is the gift of divine grace, is amazing at times to the people of God; as when they are enabled to ſee the glory of Chriſt in the myſtery of his perſon and perfections, in the goſpel, and a bright ſhine and ſpecial luſtre of the two other divine perſons, as will always deſerve the regard and attention of believing ſouls (*b*).

Or, 5thly, The goſpel is the promiſe of eternal life made to Chriſt on the behalf of others. This is a clear and evident truth; here it originates and takes its riſe; here lies and appears to me ancient and eternal goſpel, or the beginning of it: the promiſe of eternal life made known in this, to us is of the

(*a*) John iii. 16. (*b*) 2 Corinth. iv. 6.

greateſt

greateſt moment; and there is not ſuch another promiſe reſpecting this, as I remember, in all the word of God: *in hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promiſed before the world began* (*a*). Eternal life is promiſed in the goſpel, and every promiſe is connected with this; all the promiſes: and ſuppoſe we take in the whole body of them, and include and compriſe them in this (*b*); *for all the promiſes of God, in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.* The promiſe of eternal life is made ours through Jeſus Chriſt; or, would you have it further confirmed by the apoſtle John (*c*)? *And this is the promiſe that he hath promiſed us, even eternal life.* There are no conditions. It is not, if you repent, and obey the goſpel; it is not, if you yield obedience to the demands of the law; that is not the goſpel: the goſpel is the free promiſe of God the Father to his Son the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and of this eternal life the apoſtle John ſpeaks of in its riſe and origin, as it was in God, and by the Spirit of God made known to all believing perſons, either men or women; ſuch that are quick-

(*a*) Titus i. 2. (*b*) 2 Cor. i. 20. (*c*) 1 John ii. 25.

ened

ened and made alive, all truly ſenſible ſouls. (*a*) *Theſe things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye believe on the name of the Son of God.* He is the beginning and the perfection of all the word of God: there would have been no diſcoveries of this eternal life but only as 'tis manifeſted in and through the Lord Jeſus; as he is the life, ſum, and ſubſtance of all the goſpel. The apoſtle Paul, in writing to Timothy, ſpeaks of the goſpel as a myſtery before concealed, but now in Chriſt made manifeſt and revealed (*b*): *But is now made manifeſt, by the appearing of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who hath aboliſhed death, and brought life and immortality to life through the goſpel.*

Or, 6thly, The goſpel is the living word of truth. I was going to ſay, ſome preachers of the goſpel ſay that it is a dead letter; they can't, I think, be properly called miniſters of the goſpel that ſpeak diminutively of the goſpel, and call the word of truth a dead letter: it may be they are dead themſelves, or under dead frames, or keep too much company with dead companions. The apoſtle

(*a*) 1 John v. 13. (*b*) 2 Tim. i. 10.

Peter

Peter knew otherwiſe than this, when he ſays to the ſaints (*a*), *Being born again, not of corruptible ſeed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.* We know that the written word of God, without the influence of the Spirit of God, can never give life. *It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the fleſh profiteth nothing; the words that I ſpeak unto you, they are ſpirit, and they are life* (*b*). 'Tis not in this ſenſe a dead letter. There are many precious times and ſeaſons, now, when believers can read this living word of truth, the goſpel, with ſome warmth, affection, ſpiritual light, underſtanding, and edification: there is always entertainment, more or leſs, for believing ſouls, in the goſpel;—at all times it is the living word of truth. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when addreſſing his Divine Father on behalf of his diſciples, ſpeaks thus in his petition to him (*c*): *Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth:* and this is what we call the goſpel; which is generous wine to the ſaints, and the living word of truth: 'tis that by which believers are led into the myſteries

(*a*) 1 Pet. i. 23. (*b*) John vi. 63. (*c*) John xvii. 17.

ened and made alive, all truly ſenſible ſouls. (a) *Theſe things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye believe on the name of the Son of God.* He is the beginning and the perfection of all the word of God: there would have been no diſcoveries of this eternal life but only as 'tis manifeſted in and through the Lord Jeſus; as he is the life, ſum, and ſubſtance of all the goſpel. The apoſtle Paul, in writing to Timothy, ſpeaks of the goſpel as a myſtery before concealed, but now in Chriſt made manifeſt and revealed (b): *But is now made manifeſt, by the appearing of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who hath aboliſhed death, and brought life and immortality to life through the goſpel.*

Or, 6thly, The goſpel is the living word of truth. I was going to ſay, ſome preachers of the goſpel ſay that it is a dead letter; they can't, I think, be properly called miniſters of the goſpel that ſpeak diminutively of the goſpel, and call the word of truth a dead letter: it may be they are dead themſelves, or under dead frames, or keep too much company with dead companions. The apoſtle

(a) 1 John v. 13. (b) 2 Tim. i. 10.

Peter

Peter knew otherwiſe than this, when he ſays to the ſaints (*a*), *Being born again, not of corruptible ſeed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.* We know that the written word of God, without the influence of the Spirit of God, can never give life. *It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the fleſh profiteth nothing; the words that I ſpeak unto you, they are ſpirit, and they are life* (*b*). 'Tis not in this ſenſe a dead letter. There are many precious times and ſeaſons, now, when believers can read this living word of truth, the goſpel, with ſome warmth, affection, ſpiritual light, underſtanding, and edification: there is always entertainment, more or leſs, for believing ſouls, in the goſpel;—at all times it is the living word of truth. Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, when addreſſing his Divine Father on behalf of his diſciples, ſpeaks thus in his petition to him (*c*): *Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth:* and this is what we call the goſpel; which is generous wine to the ſaints, and the living word of truth: 'tis that by which believers are led into the myſteries

(*a*) 1 Pet. i. 23. (*b*) John vi. 63. (*c*) John xvii. 17.

of grace; and are in conſequence of this, upon their receiving this divine teſtimony, and believing, ſealed with the holy ſpirit of promiſe, as the believing Epheſians were(*a*), *in whom ye alſo truſted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the goſpel of your ſalvation;* in whom alſo, after that ye believed, ye were ſealed with that holy ſpirit of promiſe. Or, thus, the goſpel may be conſidered,

I. As a free declaration of the covenant of peace.

II. As a free declaration of redemption by the blood of Chriſt.

III. As a free declaration of the pardon of ſin by the blood of Chriſt.

IV. As a free declaration of the gates of heaven being opened by the blood of Chriſt.

Firſt, As a free declaration of the covenant of peace. This is ſcripture language, and agrees with the mind and will of God in the inſpired writings of the Old and New Teſtament. The covenant of grace and the covenant of peace are one and the ſame; they are not ſpecifically different, or two covenants: there is no diſtinction, that I know

(*a*) Eph. i. 13.

of,

of, though ſome have otherwiſe thought; neither is it to be thought we could make peace with God ourſelves, as ſome have fooliſhly directed others to do. My peace and yours, and our reconciliation with God, is brought about and effected only by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and therefore he ſays to the church of old (*a*), *For this is as the waters of Noah unto me; for as I have ſworn that the waters of Noah ſhould no more go over the earth, ſo have I ſworn that I would not be wrath with thee, nor rebuke thee; for the mountains ſhall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindneſs ſhall not depart from thee, neither ſhall the covenant of my peace be removed, ſaith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee.* Here you ſee the perpetuity, ſtability, and invariable nature of this covenant of peace, which is no leſs than a free-grace covenant, and ſo one and the ſame: and when the people of God are enabled by his ſpirit to behold how richly it is ſtored with all ſpiritual bleſſings, they may with exulting language cry out, *Grace, grace unto it* (*b*), while they behold a beautiful ſhine of the perfec-

(*a*) Iſaiah liv. 9, 10. (*b*) Zech. iv. 7.

tions of Jehovah through Chriſt, as made known in this covenant; and enjoying the privileges of a preached goſpel, and experiencing its ſweetneſs, power, and ſalutary effects, they exclaim, as other ſaints have done, (*a*) *Beautiful are the feet of them that preach the goſpel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!* And ſuch a covenant it is; becauſe Chriſt is the ſubſtance of it, the body and bulk of the covenant; he is the people's covenant, by the gift and free donation of his divine father (*b*); and as the apoſtle Paul tells the Coloſſians (*c*), *and having made peace, through the blood of his croſs, by him to reconcile all things unto himſelf.* By him I ſay, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven, he hath made peace; and this is a ſolid foundation for holy truſt and confidence. How weak and fooliſh is it, therefore, for the unregenerate part of mankind to ſuppoſe they have any power to make peace betwixt God and themſelves! This is very inconſiſtent indeed, and abſurd, ridiculous, and altogether repugnant to truth.

Secondly, As a free declaration of redemption by the blood of Chriſt. Sinners don't

(*a*) Rom. x. 15. (*b*) Iſaiah xlix. 8. (*c*) Coloſ. i. 20.

re-

redeem themſelves, they have no price, or valuable conſideration, to pay to God for their ſins. Believers in Chriſt have found, and do now, at times and ſeaſons, when the ſpirit of God ſhews them how vile their ſins and iniquities are, how incapable they are to contribute any thing towards their recovery from captivity; and they acknowledge their ſins, and mourn over them before the Lord: and 'tis a plain caſe, as we are ſinners, and are violators of the law of God, we have nothing to do in our own redemption. The people of God are as paſſive in their own redemption as Lazarus was when he was dead and laid in the grave. But though this is our truly miſerable ſtate and condition, the goſpel is a free declaration of redemption by the blood of Chriſt; and a moſt amiable and glorious goſpel doctrine it is to believers; and to this precious blood of Chriſt it is aſcribed and attributed by the apoſtle Peter: (a) *Foraſmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold, from your vain converſation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Chriſt, as a lamb without blemiſh*

(a) 1 Pet. i. 18, 19.

and

and without ſpot. Wonderful love, grace, and mercy, ſhine here. Can any perſon intereſted in this precious blood of Chriſt ſpeak diminutively and meanly of it, or undervalue it, and ſay 'tis no more than the blood of a mere creature? No, I am perſuaded they cannot. Was it no more than the blood of a creature, it could be nothing available in my redemption, nor ſalvation, nor in the redemption or ſalvation of any ſinful mortal man; but it is, bleſſed be God for it! the blood of him that is God and man united; therefore 'tis available for all the great ends and wiſe purpoſes for which it was ſhed; and is of more power, virtue, and efficacy, to redeem and ſave the chief of ſinners, who are God's people, than there is in the power of ſin and Satan to damn them. This redemption we are ſpeaking of, as it is by the blood of Chriſt, and ſo a goſpel doctrine, is of the greateſt moment and importance; and thoſe that contemn, deſpiſe, and reject it, to final impenitence, no ideas, words, or language, can fully expreſs their dreadful ſtate and condition. On the other hand, we, who have believed through grace, can with ſome degree of chearfulneſs, and thankfulneſs, join

with

with the church triumphant(*a*): *And they ſung a new ſong, ſaying, thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the ſeals thereof; for thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and haſt made us unto our God kings and prieſts, and we ſhall reign on the earth.* This is good and bleſſed news for the ſaints, and choice bleſſed goſpel truths.

Thirdly, As a free declaration of the pardon of ſin by the blood of Chriſt. God does not pardon the ſins of men becauſe they deſerve it, and are in ſuch and ſuch circumſtances, or have acquired ſuch habits and diſpoſitions, and forſaken ſome vices; by which they are qualified for pardon: the goſpel knows nothing of the remiſſion of ſin in this way; God, in pardoning the ſins of his people, is to be conſidered as having puniſhed ſin to the full in the perſon of Chriſt, their ſurety. Here mercy and truth have met together; for ſuch is the holineſs of God, that he cannot ſpare ſin(*b*), and he will never pardon ſinners in any other way. The blood of Chriſt was ſhed for this end and purpoſe;

(*a*) Rev. v. 9, 10. (*b*) Pſalm lxxxv. 10.

and

and as the author to the Hebrews aſſures us, that *almoſt all things are by the law purged with blood, and without ſhedding of blood* (even Chriſt's blood) *is no remiſſion* (*a*). God does not pardon the ſins of men becauſe they are reformed and become virtuous, which before were vicious; not upon ſuch a foundation or bottom as this--no--nor were ever any ſinners pardoned as yet, nor ever will be. Pardon of ſin is manifeſted to ſinners upon the foundation of Chriſt's ſatisfaction and atonement for ſin, not becauſe (as ſome have ſaid ignorantly) the Lord is a benevolent Being, or that God will make reaſonable allowances for our foibles and failures. This agrees neither with law nor goſpel. God never did, nor never will, pardon ſinners, but on the account of Chriſt's ſatisfaction: and the apoſtle, in writing to the church at Epheſus, confirms this (*b*): *In whom we have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches of his grace.* Men, by ſin, are in a ſtate of bondage and ſlavery, and guilt, and filthineſs; and ſo, by nature, are at a diſtance from God, and in a ſtate of alienation and oppoſition to him; and would

(*a*) Heb. ix. 22. (*b*) Eph. i. 7.

have

have been for ever excluded this ſpiritual bleſſing of pardon, by the blood of Chriſt, had it not been eternally ſettled in the divine mind: nay, we had never known ſuch a free and glorious declaration as we have now in the ſacred writings.

Fourthly, As a free declaration of the gates of heaven being opened by the blood of Chriſt. And they could be opened by no other perſon, nor in any other way; there was no other way ſo befitting the nature and perfections, and being, of God; as we have revealed in the ſcriptures of truth, and clearly and fully manifeſted there, and conveyed down to us, as the ground and foundation of our rejoicing. Can we think of the gates of heaven being opened by the blood of Chriſt, and not be thankful? Becauſe he hath fulfilled all righteouſneſs; and he hath a right to demand an entrance there for all his people(*a*): *Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation, which keepeth the truth, may enter in.* Nay, he hath by his blood opened the gates of heaven ſo wide, as that all the election of his Father's grace may enter in; and through theſe he enters himſelf(*b*): *Whither the fore-*

(*a*) Iſaiah xxvi. 2. (*b*) Heb. vi. 20.

runner

runner is for us entered, even Jeſus, made an high prieſt for ever, after the order of Melchiſedec. And as he hath entered there, and hath opened the gates of heaven by his own blood, all his followers will enter the ſame way; that is to ſay, by the blood of Jeſus(*a*): *Neither by the blood of goats, nor calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

Or, thus, the goſpel may be conſidered,

I. As a free declaration of the juſtification of ſinners by the obedience and righteouſneſs of Chriſt.

II. As a free declaration of the expiation of ſin by the ſacrifice of Chriſt.

III. As a free declaration of regeneration, and ſanctification, by the ſpirit of Chriſt.

IV. As a free declaration of the name, perſon, glory, beauty, offices, characters, and relations of Chriſt. All theſe are compriſed in the goſpel.

Firſt, As a free declaration of the juſtification of ſinners by the obedience and righteouſneſs of Chriſt: by his vicarious obedience and righteouſneſs, the whole of his active and

(*a*) Heb. ix. 12.

paſſive

paſſive obedience; not partly one thing, and partly another, but by the entire obedience and righteouſneſs of the Lord Jeſus. A man cannot be righteous, nor juſtified, without this perfect obedience of Chriſt: this is imputed to all the people of God. As Adam's ſin was imputed to all his poſterity, ſo the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is imputed to all his elect; and, as the apoſtle obſerves(*a*), *for as by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners, even ſo by the obedience of one* (meaning Chriſt) *ſhall many be made righteous.* And ſo, by the obedience of one, all that are brought to glory are made righteous, and juſtified. And here we may bleſs God for the goſpel; as 'tis a free declaration of the free juſtification of ſinners by this obedience of Chriſt(*b*); *for Chriſt is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.* He perfectly obeyed the law in every precept, and he ſuffered the penalty of the law, or we muſt have ſuffered it in hell for ever; and ſovereign grace and mercy it is that all the ſufferings of our Lord Jeſus were penal ſufferings: and we that hope, through grace, we have an intereſt in Chriſt, as mem-

(*a*) Rom. v. 19. (*b*) Rom. x. 4.

runner is for us entered, even Jeſus, made an high prieſt for ever, after the order of Melchiſedec. And as he hath entered there, and hath opened the gates of heaven by his own blood, all his followers will enter the ſame way; that is to ſay, by the blood of Jeſus(*a*): *Neither by the blood of goats, nor calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*

Or, thus, the goſpel may be conſidered,

I. As a free declaration of the juſtification of ſinners by the obedience and righteouſneſs of Chriſt.

II. As a free declaration of the expiation of ſin by the ſacrifice of Chriſt.

III. As a free declaration of regeneration, and ſanctification, by the ſpirit of Chriſt.

IV. As a free declaration of the name, perſon, glory, beauty, offices, characters, and relations of Chriſt. All theſe are compriſed in the goſpel.

Firſt, As a free declaration of the juſtification of ſinners by the obedience and righteouſneſs of Chriſt: by his vicarious obedience and righteouſneſs, the whole of his active and

(*a*) Heb. ix. 12.

paſſive

paſſive obedience; not partly one thing, and partly another, but by the entire obedience and righteouſneſs of the Lord Jeſus. A man cannot be righteous, nor juſtified, without this perfect obedience of Chriſt: this is imputed to all the people of God. As Adam's ſin was imputed to all his poſterity, ſo the righteouſneſs of Chriſt is imputed to all his elect; and, as the apoſtle obſerves (*a*), *for as by one man's diſobedience many were made ſinners, even ſo by the obedience of one* (meaning Chriſt) *ſhall many be made righteous.* And ſo, by the obedience of one, all that are brought to glory are made righteous, and juſtified. And here we may bleſs God for the goſpel; as 'tis a free declaration of the free juſtification of ſinners by this obedience of Chriſt (*b*); *for Chriſt is the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth.* He perfectly obeyed the law in every precept, and he ſuffered the penalty of the law, or we muſt have ſuffered it in hell for ever; and ſovereign grace and mercy it is that all the ſufferings of our Lord Jeſus were penal ſufferings: and we that hope, through grace, we have an intereſt in Chriſt, as mem-

(*a*) Rom. v. 19. (*b*) Rom. x. 4.

bers of his myſtical body, and have manſions prepared for us in heaven, muſt own this is owing ſolely to the free favour and grace of God; and this is what this goſpel abounds with and declares, and is as plain as can be to an intelligent creature, as he is enlightened by the ſpirit of God. Scripture language is beautiful, at all times, to believers; and excellent, ſublime, high and lofty; and 'tis no wonder the apoſtle ſhould cry out(*a*), *O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowledge of God!* And when in particular treating on this ſubject, or in preaching of the goſpel, found by bleſſed and happy experience, the truth contained and held forth therein, and being made effectual by the ſpirit of God to many ſouls.

Secondly, As a free declaration of the expiation of ſin by the ſacrifice of Chriſt. Sin could not be put away, and made an end of, and buried in eternal oblivion, in any other way; no real and proper atonement, and which is ſatisfactory for all the ends and purpoſes to be anſwered by it, but this, the ſacrifice of Chriſt: and that law and juſtice might have their full demand given them, and be

(*a*) Rom. xi. 33.

perfectly

perfectly ſatisfied, Chriſt and his divine Father agreed in thoſe eternal ſtipulations, and ſolemn contract, that were entered into and agreed between the Father and the Son from everlaſting: and by Chriſt fulfilling his engagements, ſin is expiated by the ſacrifice of Chriſt: he offered up himſelf, body and ſoul, *a complete ſacrifice for ſin, and acceptable to God* (*a*); and of him, and the perfection of his ſacrifice, the apoſtle thus ſpeaks (*b*), *Who being the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himſelf purged our ſins, ſat down on the right hand of the Majeſty on high.* And by this Chriſt hath removed the ſins of his people as far as the Eaſt is from the Weſt, and out of the ſight of avenging juſtice (*c*). A moſt precious and comfortable truth is this; he having made atonement for them; and faith now receives the atonement, and rejoices in it: and not only ſo, but we alſo joy in God through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom alſo we have now received the atonement (*d*). So Chriſt, by being ſacrificed for his people, hath

(*a*) Heb. x. 12, 14. Eph. v. 2. (*b*) Heb. i. 3.
(*c*) Pſalm ciii. 12. (*d*) Rom. v. 11.

effec-

effectually removed their ſin, and taken away their guilt; that ſhall be no bar nor hindrance to their entering into thoſe bleſſed manſions of glory prepared and provided for them from the foundation of the world: and what a wonderful, amazing, kind, and adorable friend muſt our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be, having offered himſelf once a ſacrifice for us, and not often, as the Jewiſh high prieſts, every year, by the blood of others. This was not needed, nor requiſite for Chriſt to do; for then muſt he often have ſuffered, ſince the foundation of the world: but now once, in the end of the world, hath he appeared, to put away ſin, by the ſacrifice of himſelf(*a*).

Thirdly, As a free declaration of regeneration, and ſanctification, by the ſpirit of Chriſt. All this is declared in the goſpel; and thoſe for whom the goſpel was particularly deſigned, and to be made to them moſt uſeful, this was purpoſed by the three Divine Perſons, by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The people of God only are the ſubjects of this work of grace; and in which they are altogether paſſive. Regeneration is an infuſion, or implantation, of living

(*a*) Heb. ix. 26.

principles

principles in the hearts of ſinners, by which they move and act ſpiritually, and which had no exiſtence in them before this grace was wrought in them. And now the dead are quickened, and made alive to God. And ſuch whoſe mercy it is to be bleſſed with theſe holy habits, can never ſink into the death of ſin again, or become unregenerate. 'Tis true, they may be inactive at times, reſpecting the actings of this divine principle, and be in darkneſs, deadneſs, and perplexity of mind, through a different, a jarring principle in them, but can never loſe the habit of grace. When Nicodemus came to our Lord, he was ignorant of this divine life: Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, *Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God.* Nicodemus ſaith unto him, *How can a man be born when he is old; can he enter the ſecond time into his mother's womb, and be born?* Jeſus anſwered, *Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a man be born of water, and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God: that which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh; and that which is born of the Spirit is ſpirit* (and what is fleſh but corrupt nature?) *Marvel not, that I ſaid unto*

unto thee, ye muſt be born again: the wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit (*a*). We can tell the certainty of it, and know the truth of it, that ſo it is, by the ſeveral actings of the regenerate principle, by what fruits and effects are produced by it; but we know not the manner or modus of it, as it is inexplicable, and is therefore compared to the wind. And though we cannot comprehend this work of the Spirit in regenerating men, 'tis abſolutely needful and neceſſary, whatever profeſſion of religion men may paſs under: and, however ſtrict and circumſpect they may be, without the power and influence of the Spirit of God to effect this work, they never can enjoy the kingdom of heaven; that is moſt certain: and wherever this is wrought, 'tis always accompanied with the ſanctification of the Spirit; as is evident in the characters of the Corinthians, who were before wicked, abominable, and vile; as the apoſtle aſſures us, in his writing to them (*b*): *And ſuch were ſome of you; but ye are waſhed, but ye are ſanctified,*

(*a*) John iii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. (*b*) 1 Cor. vi. 11.

but

but ye are juſtified, in the name of the Lord Jeſus, and by the ſpirit of our God.

Fourthly, And to add no more, The goſpel may be conſidered as a free declaration of the name, perſon, glory, beauty, offices, characters, and relations of Chriſt. We ſhall not enlarge here, but leave that to thoſe who by divine grace have been enabled to reliſh the things advanced, and conclude with the words of the text, *And there they preached the Goſpel.*

END OF DISCOURSE I.

DISCOURSE II.

ACTS xiv. 7.

And there they preached the Goſpel.

IT will not be improper, as theſe Diſcourſes are deſired to be made public, and ſo to be taken down, that we give you a ſpecimen of the method with which we began; and it may be remembered we promiſed,

I. To conſider what the goſpel is;

II. What it is to preach the goſpel;

III. Under what characters Paul and Barnabas preached the goſpel.

We have in a preceding diſcourſe gone through the *Firſt*, namely, What the goſpel is,—and now come,

Secondly, To ſhew you what it is to preach the goſpel.

And

And to preach the goſpel is, either,

Firſt, To proclaim the mind and will of God in the goſpel to others, as an herald, or cryer; or,

Secondly, Is to preach the ſeveral doctrines of the goſpel; or,

Thirdly, Is to preach the goſpel in its harmony and conſiſtency; or,

Fourthly, Is to preach the goſpel in a workman-like and well-digeſted manner.

And to preach the goſpel is, either, firſt, to proclaim the mind and will of God in the goſpel to others, as an herald or cryer; the alluſion ſeems to refer to ambaſſadors, who perſonate their ſovereigns, and publiſh their mind and will, and treat of things of importance; and ſo refers to preachers and miniſters of the word, who faithfully publiſh the great and important truths of the goſpel, and in a ſenſe may be conſidered as harbingers and forerunners, as they are officers of Chriſt, and repreſent him; or like John Baptiſt, who proclaimed the mind and will of God. As to the ſubſtance of it (*a*), *The voice of one crying in the wilderneſs, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths ſtraight*,—he did this as

(*a*) Mark, i. 3.

an herald, as a public noted cryer, ſuch a one as the prophet Iſaiah is commanded to be (*a*): *Cry aloud, ſpare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and ſhew my people their tranſgreſſions, and the houſe of Jacob their ſins.* This is the work of an herald, or preacher of the goſpel, to declare, and preach the mind and will of God, as therein contained, and as plain and obvious truths, and not in the leaſt to deviate from what he hath in commiſſion to preach; and this is the mind and will of God, as revealed in the goſpel, that all the people of God, not one excepted, neither Jew nor Gentile, but ſhall be certainly ſaved, every man and woman of them, in and by Chriſt Jeſus: *And this is, ſays he, the will of him that ſent me, that every one that ſeeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlaſting life, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day* (*b*). And the mind and will of God in the goſpel is, that this goſpel ſhould be promulgated and delivered out with integrity, and uprightneſs; every miniſter of it, not one excepted, ſhould do this with all plainneſs, and godly ſincerity.

Or, *Secondly*, Is to preach the ſeveral doc-

(*a*) Iſaiah lviii. 1. (*b*) John vi. 40.

trines

trines of the goſpel, as they are ſolid, ſubſtantial, evangelical, and wholeſome doctrines. *They are the wholeſome words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and doctrines according to godlineſs*(a), *and not one of them is to be ſlighted*, as they come under the notice of the miniſters of Chriſt, and are the matter of their ſtudy and miniſtrations.

They are ſo to preach the goſpel, as to keep back no part of the price thereof, nor to be aſhamed of it: Paul was not, as he aſſures us(b), *For I am not aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt, for it is the power of God unto ſalvation to every one that believeth: to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the Greek.* But we live in a ſad day, when the goſpel is deſpiſed, and men are aſhamed of it.

Lectures of morality, and moral ſuaſion, pleaſe numbers much better; they can't ſtand the teſt of of ſcripture, nor endure to hear ſeveral bleſſed truths, which have formerly been ſweeter to the ſaints, than honey, or honeycomb, that are particularly comprized in the goſpel, and make a great part thereof.

But we live to ſee ſomething of the fulfilment of the apoſtle's prediction(c); *For the*

(a) 1 Tim. vi. 3. (b) Rom. i. 16. (c) 2 Tim. iv. 3.

time

time will come, when they will not endure ſound doctrine, but after their own luſts, ſhall they heap to themſelves teachers, having itching ears: Are not things ſo now in this day, and too viſible to be denied?

It hath been hinted, that to preach the goſpel, is to preach the ſeveral doctrines of it; we will mention a few, in the room of many, that might be inſiſted on:

Firſt, The doctrine of the Trinity of perſons in the Godhead.

Secondly, The doctrine of Eternal Election.

Thirdly, The doctrine of Chriſt's perfect ſatisfaction and atonement for Sin.

Fourthly, The doctrine of Chriſt being made Sin, and a Curſe for his people.

Fifthly, The doctrine of the final perſeverance of the Saints in Grace, to eternal glory. —Theſe are goſpel doctrines.

Firſt, The doctrine of a Trinity of perſons in the Godhead:—This is plain in Scripture; many of the enemies of the goſpel have oppoſed this doctrine, becauſe a Trinity of perſons are not ſyllabically expreſſed therein, which argues the pride and prejudice of many, becauſe the characters given them in the word of God prove it is ſo; and perſons who

are

are enemies to this truth, rather diſcover a rooted hatred and enmity, and prejudice to it, rather than ingenuity, becauſe ſo clearly revealed in the goſpel.

And though there are many who deny this, yet did men attend cloſely to the letter of the word, they might read the doctrine of a Trinity of perſons clear as the ſun there, and may be proved from the baptiſm of Chriſt; and it uſed to be a ſaying among ſome of the Antients, go to Jordan, and learn a Trinity of perſons; this is as plain as needs be; and a very plain illuſtration we have of this truth, in the goſpel of Matthew, concerning our dear Lord, *And Jeſus when he was baptized, went up ſtraightway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he ſaw the Spirit of God deſcending like a dove, and lighting upon him, and lo a voice from heaven, ſaying, this is my beloved ſon, in whom I am well pleaſed*(a). Can any deny this? As a matter of fact, is it not clearly proved by inſpiration, delivered by an inſpired writer, and therefore demands the credence, aſſent, and acknowledgement of ſuch that fear God.

(a) Matt. iii. 16, 17.

And

And this commiſſion to the diſciples of Chriſt, was given by our Lord Jeſus, after his reſurrection from the dead, when he gave a charge to them, his diſciples, when they were called to adminiſter this ordinance of baptiſm, to proper ſubjects of it(*a*), *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you; and lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world*; and 'tis moſt evident from this, that there is a plurality of perſons in the Godhead, or three perſons in the adorable Trinity; and this ſo evident, as that one and two make three. But plain as it is, as we hinted before, perſons are prejudiced againſt it, which is of ſo much weight and concern in the ſalvation of ſinners. The apoſtle John fully aſſures us of this truth(*b*); *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt; and theſe three are one:* we don't ſay that they are one in the ſame ſenſe they are three; that would be an abſurdity, reſpecting this great myſtery, but one eſſentially, and three perſonally.

(*a*) Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. (*b*) 1 John v. 7.

Secondly,

Secondly, The doctrine of Eternal Election. This is a goſpel doctrine, but can't be endured by numbers of profeſſors of religion, who diſown it; and in doing ſo, they tacitly deny the whole bible; the denial of which is to corrupt the word of God, and ſet aſide his decrees, and purpoſes. Was it not with this doctrine that ſome of our firſt Reformers from Popery, I ſay ſome of them, ſet out with, and preached it up as the grand foundation doctrine of the goſpel? And that it is ſo, that there is ſuch a thing as the Lord's having an Elect people, choſen for himſelf, that he everlaſtingly ſet his love upon, is as clear as the ſun; the apoſtle Paul, the great aſſertor of this eternal truth, compriſes it in his challenge (*a*): *Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that juſtifieth.* Election always ſuppoſeth God's everlaſting love to his elect, as well as the rejection of others (*b*). *Even ſo, then, at this preſent time alſo, there is a remnant according to the election of Grace*; which ſcripture doctrine however deſpiſed and rejected, will ſtand for ever. And the apoſtle further adds (*c*), *What then, Iſrael hath not obtained that which he*

(*a*) Rom. viii. 33. (*b*) Ibid. xi. 5. (*c*) Ibid. ver. 7.

ſeeketh for, but the election hath obtained it, and the reſt were blinded: who the reſt are intended by the apoſtle, you may eaſily gueſs.

And with reſpect to this goſpel doctrine and indubitable and immoveable truth, it ſtands in the very front, and is the foundation of all ſpiritual bleſſings, and is ſo placed and wiſely conſidered by the apoſtle; of which take this as a ſpecimen in the room of other paſſages of ſcripture that might be advanced(*a*): *Bleſſed be the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed us with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt: According as he hath choſen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we ſhould be holy and without blame, before him in love: Having predeſtinated us unto the adoption of children by Jeſus Chriſt to himſelf, according to the good pleaſure of his will, To the praiſe of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved*: This is not only a goſpel doctrine, but is the foundation of all holineſs and ſanctification; the foundation of all true religion in this world, and ever will be. There

(*a*) Eph. i. 3, 4, 5, 6.

never

never was any real godlineſs but it originated here, however oppoſed by men of corrupt minds, that are deſtitute of truth.

Thirdly, The doctrine of Chriſt's perfect ſatisfaction and atonement for Sin. This is a goſpel doctrine, and full of ſolid comfort, joy, and conſolation to believers, who are ſenſible that they owe to God more than ten thouſand talents, and have nothing at all to pay; and 'tis more or leſs refreſhing to all that know God's way of ſaving ſinners by Chriſt; and I call it perfect ſatisfaction; becauſe, otherwiſe Chriſt is no more than a partial Saviour.

But, bleſſed be God! he hath made perfect ſatisfaction and atonement for ſin, in which I rejoice: Nay, what is wonderful! before he made his ſoul an offering for ſin, he made ſatisfaction by ſtipulation and agreement, when he lay in the boſom of his divine Father, and became reſponſible for all his myſtical body.

This doctrine of Chriſt's ſatisfaction and atonement for Sin, is the marrow of the word of God; and what would the Bible be without it? and which was particularly delighted in by many of our firſt Reformers, as they came off from Popery, which we ſeem to be

going back into, as faſt, or faſter, than they emerged out of it.

Theſe things inſiſted on, are things of the greateſt moment and importance; if Chriſt has not made atonement and perfect ſatisfaction for my ſin, I am in a moſt wretched ſtate; muſt eternally lie under the wrath and curſe of God: But he is made by his divine Father, a perfect Saviour (*a*); *For it became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many ſons unto glory, to make the captain of their ſalvation perfect through ſufferings.* This is not a novel doctrine, it is a ſolid and eternal one, and that which will ſtand for ever; nay, when heaven and earth ſhall paſs away, this ſhall remain the ſame as it now is, and ever was. This doctrine, and the conſideration of it, and a good hope through grace, have delighted my ſoul and enlarged my heart with thankfulneſs, when thinking over the decrees of God, and his reſolves of the ſalvation of ſinners, by Chriſt.

And this is what Daniel propheſied of, reſpecting the Meſſiah, as what he would do (*b*), *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people,*

(*a*) Heb. ii. 10. (*b*) Dan. ix. 24.

an-

and upon thy holy city, to finiſh the tranſgreſſion, and to make an end of ſins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs, and to ſeal up the viſion and the prophecy, and to anoint the moſt holy. Either Chriſt has ſatisfied for the ſins of his people, or he has not; if he has not made perfect ſatisfaction—if the divine Father has not accepted of that ſatisfaction—and if law and juſtice are not perfectly ſatisfied, what a dreadful ſtate muſt the church and people of God be in?—and to hell we muſt certainly go at laſt. To give this up into the hands of the Arians, and Socinians, and Baxterians, with numbers of others, is ſhameful; and many of the Arminians are in the ſame predicament; are of the ſame opinion reſpecting this truth.

But this doctrine will bear mentioning over again; the doctrine of Chriſt's perfect ſatisfaction and atonement for ſin; and this is included in what Chriſt ſuffered, when he ſuffered the penalty of the law; what he did in ſuffering in the law, place, room, and ſtead of his people; for all the ſufferings of Chriſt were penal ſufferings.

But this is denied by the Socinians, but intended

tended and properly meant by the apoſtle Peter; for Chriſt, alſo, ſays the apoſtle, hath *once ſuffered for ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the fleſh, but quickened by the ſpirit* (*a*): O, what a ſhine of grace is here!

Fourthly, The doctrine of Chriſt being made Sin and a Curſe for his people. We might have included this in the former particular, but choſe to keep them diſtinct; tho' they are both included in the active and paſſive obedience of Chriſt. But as the word of God diſtinguiſhes them, ſo we choſe to conſider them apart, as agreeable to the ſame word; and we are aſſured this is a goſpel doctrine as well as the former; Chriſt was made Sin and a Curſe for his people.

This truth may ſound harſh to ſome, but we know that he was made Sin, by an act of his divine Father, when all the ſins of God's Elect were made to meet upon him; therefore, the Church ſpeaking, or the Holy Ghoſt on behalf of the Church, ſays (*b*), *All we like ſheep have gone aſtray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all:* Sin was charged upon

(*a*) 1 Peter 3. 18. (*b*) Iſaiah liii. 6.

Chriſt

Chriſt, though in himſelf innocent and clear of all ſin.

But the juſtice of God, finding it there, and Chriſt to be the ſinners ſurety, wounded him and ſmote him in the manner he did, becauſe he found there on him, all the huge maſs, the ſins of all the Elect of God, and all their iniquities were imputed to him, or made to meet upon him, by his own voluntary conſent, and no unjuſt act in his divine Father, as perfectly agreeing with their determinations: therefore we may look it over with wonder and delight, and bleſs the Lord for it, as declared by the apoſtle Paul (*a*), *He hath made him to be ſin for us, who knew no ſin, that we might be made the righteouſneſs of God in him.*

And as he was made Sin for us, ſo he was made a Curſe; as is evident from the ſame apoſtle elſewhere (*b*); *Chriſt hath redeemed us from the curſe of the law, being made a Curſe for us: for it is written, curſed is every one that hangeth on a tree.* Here is grace, free grace, myſterious grace, pure grace, both in the divine Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt; theſe things, therefore, are not to be paſſed over in ſilence.

(*a*) 2 Cor. v. 11. (*b*) Gal. iii. 13.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, The doctrine of the Saints final perſeverance in grace to eternal glory. This is a goſpel doctrine; that the ſaints not only ſtand in the favour of God now, but ſhall ever remain in the favour of God, though nothing but weakneſs and depravity in themſelves; and they find they have no ſtrength nor power to move heaven-ward; but there are all ſupplies of grace for them in Chriſt, and provided for them in the covenant of grace, by his divine Father, for their perſeverance in grace to eternal glory

This is as clear as divine revelation can make it, though this doctrine is greatly abuſed and run down by the Arminians in general, by almoſt the whole body of them, who deny this comfortable ſelf-evident truth, and embrace popery in its ſtead.

'Twould be almoſt endleſs to recite ſcriptures in its ſupport, both from the Old and New Teſtament, which might be eaſily done; but I forbear, and now ſhall only mention two or three;

Firſt, Our Lord when ſpeaking of his ſheep (*a*), *I give unto them eternal life; and they ſhall never periſh, neither ſhall any pluck*

(*a*) John x. 28, 29.

them

them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. Here the Elect of God are ſpoken of, which our Lord calls his ſheep: here divine power and faithfulneſs are engaged for their ſafety.

And concerning this doctrine, that God's people ſhall ſurely perſevere in grace, the apoſtle Paul, writing to the Philippians, confirms this ſacred truth; *Being confident* (ſays he) *of this very thing, that he whcih hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jeſus Chriſt* (*a*). That good work muſt be loſt and ſink into nothing, if the people of God don't perſevere in grace and holineſs to eternal glory.

We believe that the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who has inſpired this and other writers, who wrote this and all other divine truths, that they wrote as they were moved and influenced by the Holy Ghoſt; ſo this doctrine ſhall ſtand for ever and ever, whoever oppoſes it.

And this appears clear and evident in the vocation and vivification of the ſaints; namely, in their calling and quickening; and the apoſtle Peter aſſures the ſaints, they were called to

(*a*) Philipp. i. 6.

this eternal glory, by the God of all grace; *But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Chriſt Jeſus, after that ye have ſuffered awhile, make you perfect, ſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle you* (*a*).

It is certain, that eternal glory ſhall be enjoyed by all thoſe who are the ſubjects of grace now; and that all the people of God, ſhall be brought to the full enjoyment and poſſeſſion of this eternal glory, as ſure as this truth is related and maintained in the word of God.

But we proceed according to our method.

Or, *Thirdly*, Is to preach the goſpel in its harmony and conſiſtency. There are no jars, nor blemiſhes, nor contradictions, in the goſpel of Chriſt; no, the writers or penmen of it, were employed by the Holy Ghoſt; and the preachers of it now, ſhould preach it in a conſiſtent way, as in the word of God it is revealed: and the doctrines of the goſpel are in perfect agreement one with another; all agreeing with the perfections of God.

If perſons blend things together, we cannot account for their inconſiſtencies: there is too much of a ſpurious goſpel delivered in the day in which we live; therefore miniſters muſt

(*a*) 1 Pet. v. 10.

have

have recourſe to the word of God, hear what that ſpeaks, and attend to it; as ſays the prophet Iſaiah (*a*). *To the law and to the teſtimony; and if they ſpeak not according to this word, it is becauſe there is no light in them.*

If men bring any thing contrary to this, it is to be rejected and ſet at naught; it always becomes preachers of the goſpel, in all their preaching, to be harmonious, the ſame at one time as another; always to be conſiſtent with themſelves in their ſermons, and not make one part grin at the other, or contradict each other; this deſerves contempt and ridicule, and the apoſtle moſt juſtly and judiciouſly obſerves to the Corinthians (*b*), *For if the trumpet give an uncertain ſound, who ſhall prepare himſelf to the battle?*

The goſpel is a ſpiritual trumpet, and the blowing of it is the preaching of it; and 'tis very inconſiſtent and unwiſe, and diſingenuous, for preachers, in their diſcourſes, to preach the goſpel in one part of their diſcourſes, and quite the contrary in the other; or rather, what is worſe, neither law nor goſpel.

I am not reflecting on any particular preacher, but I know it is the common run

(*a*) Iſaioh viii. 20. (*b*) 1 Cor. xiv. 8.

of the day in which we live. But the time is coming when it will be otherwiſe; that day which the prophet Iſaiah had particularly in view; for tho' now it is partly accompliſhed, yet not as it will be in the latter day (*a*). *And it ſhall come to paſs in that day, that the great trumpet ſhall be blown, and they ſhall come that were ready to periſh in the land of Aſſyria, and the outcaſts in the land of Egypt, and ſhall worſhip the Lord in the holy mount at Jeruſalem.*

This is the goſpel trumpet; it will be known and underſtood: it ſhall not then (as now) be blown with jars and contradictions, but with an even note.

Or, *Fourthly*, Is to preach the goſpel in a workmanlike, maſterly, and well digeſted manner. The goſpel deſerves our greateſt notice and attention, and is to be ſtudied as it is the word of God, and ſo the word of truth; and ſhould not be delivered in an uncouth and inconſiſtent way, nor in a crude, raw, and undigeſted manner.

As the goſpel is of great moment and importance, therefore the preaching of it ſhould be in a workman-like manner;—it ſhould be

(*a*) Iſaiah xxvii. 13.

well

well ſtudied. All the ſcripture deſerves and requires the ſtudy of miniſters, but more eſpecially that of the goſpel. The apoſtle Paul exhorts Timothy to this (*a*); *Study to ſhew thyſelf approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*

And though it is true that cloſe attending to ſtudy is attended with fatigue, and brings wearineſs to the fleſh, as Solomon, that wiſe man, ſays to his ſon (*b*), *And further, by theſe my ſon be admoniſhed; of making many books there is no end, and much ſtudy is a wearineſs of the fleſh:* he argues thus much, that ſtudy is a wearineſs to the fleſh, though he does not exclude ſtudy, in ſo ſaying.

There is a difference between ſtudying as a wearineſs, and not ſtudying at all; it is therefore when the Spirit of God influences the mind, that it is ſatisfactory, and pleaſant, and delightful.

So it is in preaching the goſpel;—ſometimes it is hard work, becauſe the kind influence of the ſpirit is ſuſpended: the beſt of men that have ever preached it, have ſometimes found heavineſs and darkneſs, though they have

(*a*) 2 Tim. ii. 15. (*b*) Eccl. xii. 12.

been

been obliged to preach, when their preaching has not been attended with that life, pleasure, and delight, as at some other seasons: the Spirit of God, though always wise and operative, don't in a powerful way influence the ministers of the gospel at all times alike.

Or, thus, to preach the gospel,

First, Is to preach up the Spirit's work in the gospel;

Second, Is to preach it clearly and without mixture;

Third, Is to preach it with courage and boldness;

Fourth, Is to preach the gospel faithfully;

Fifth, Is to preach the gospel constantly.

And to preach the gospel,

1st, Is to preach up the Spirit's work in the gospel. The Holy Spirit only can make it powerful and effectual; it is not to persuade men that they have power or ability, either in whole, or in part, in and of themselves, to contribute any thing towards their regeneration and conversion; free will, or free agency, has nothing to do in this work.

This is altogether denied to be of the will

of

of man; and wholly denied by an inſpired writer (*a*); *Which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

The Spirit of God is the efficient in this work, and that alone; and this is moſt conſpicuous and particularly evident, in the goſpel throughout, and from the Lord by the prophet Zechariah (*b*); *Then he anſwered, and ſpake unto me, ſaying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, ſaying, Nor by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, ſaith the Lord of hoſts.*

If the Spirit's work was more preached up, perſons would better underſtand what truth is, and be better guarded againſt a confuſed jingle from the pulpit. Seeing what has now been ſaid appears, and are on the ſide of truth, therfore all that preach the goſpel, ſhould preach up the Spirit's work.

Nay, what is all preaching if this is wanting? Juſt nothing, or as beating the air, without the influence of the ſpirit of God.

So in my reading or ſtudying, if I enjoy ſpiritual comfort, it muſt be by the bleſſed Spirit, for that is his work; and he is that agent

(a) John i. 13. (*b*) Zech. iv. 6.

that

that renders the word profitable, and makes the doctrines of grace ſweet to believers: and the doctrine of regeneration alſo, though incomprehenſible and inexplicable, as to the modus of it, the truth and certainty of it is clear and viſible, that ſo it is (*a*): *The wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou heareſt the ſound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: ſo is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

And as our Lord ſpeaks elſewhere (*b*), *It is the ſpirit that quickeneth; the fleſh profiteth nothing: the words that I ſpeak unto you, they are ſpirit, they are life.*

2d, Is to preach it clearly and without mixture. A mixture with the goſpel is a diſgrace and reproach to it, and a reflection upon its infinitely wiſe author; and what Elihu ſaid of himſelf to Job, ſhould be the language of every clear goſpel preacher (*c*), *My words ſhall be of the uprightneſs of my heart; and my lips ſhall utter knowledge clearly.*

It ſhould be preached clear of all human inventions; clear of all works of righteouſneſs done by creatures; clear of all

(*a*) John iii. 8. (*b*) Ibid. vi. 63. (*c*) Job xxxiii. 3.

conditions

conditions whatever; ſuch as faith, repentance, and new obedience, are ſaid to be; and ought exactly to tally with that ſcripture (*a*): *And he ſhewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as cryſtal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb*; where there was no Arminian doctrine to muddy the ſtreams of it.

3d, Is to preach it with courage and boldneſs. When I ſpeak this, I don't deſign nor mean that it conſiſts in making a great noiſe in preaching; though at the ſame time I am not fond of ſleepy preachers: there is a courage and fortitude of mind becoming every one engaged in the ſolemn work of the miniſtry; or how can it be ſuppoſed they ſhould continue ſtedfaſt in their work?

Many a true miniſter of the goſpel has met with much oppoſition in preaching of it; but we are not to be afraid of the face of any man: we ſhould take the advice the Lord gave to the prophet Jeremiah, when he was about to ſend him to the Children of Iſrael: *Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, ſaith the Lord* (*b*).

So the preachers of the goſpel ſhould not

(*a*) Rev. xxii. 1. (*b*) Jer. i. 8.

be afraid of men: the goſpel is not to be with-held, ſhould it be abuſed. And it would be well if all goſpel miniſters were as it was with Peter and John, when they were called before the rulers of the Jewiſh Sanhedrim (*a*): *Now when they ſaw the boldneſs of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them that they had been with Jeſus.*

They perceived they were unlearned and ignorant men; that is to ſay, they had no academical learning. A like account we have that Barnabas gives of Saul after he had been converted, and was afterwards called Paul: *But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apoſtles, and declared unto them how he had ſeen the Lord in the way, aud that he had ſpoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damaſcus in the name of Jeſus* (*b*).

The goſpel is not to be preached with indifference (though it is not in the power of any preacher to quicken himſelf), but with ſome degree of concern and divine fervor, and affection, which is very becoming every

(*a*) Acts iv. 13. (*b*) Ibid. ix. 27.

miniſter

miniſter of the goſpel; they are particularly to regard this.

4th, Is to preach it faithfully, or in faithfulneſs. As thoſe that know they are accountable to God, it is to be preached as in the ſight of God, with all the ſeveral truths of the goſpel connected therewith, and that are therein declared and made known by the Spirit of God.

And theſe are to be preached faithfully, as the Lord warned the prophet Jeremiah againſt the falſe prophets (*a*). *The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream, and he that my word, let him ſpeak my word faithfully: what is the chaff to the wheat, ſaith the Lord?*

Let ſuch a dreaming prophet tell his dream out; but ſtrict faithfulneſs is required in every miniſter of the goſpel: and as the apoſtle obſerves to the Corinthians, *Moreover, it is required in ſtewards, that a man be found faithful* (*b*).

5th, Is to preach it conſtantly. It is not to be dropt, in time of perſecution, when it is a difficult matter for miniſters of the goſpel to preach, by reaſon of their enemies; that

(*a*) Jer. xxiii. 28. (*b*) 1 Cor. iv. 2.

have raiſed bitter, and awful perſecutions againſt them, as the miniſters of Chriſt.

Such times have been, and may be again: awful times we now live in, and awful times may be expected in this nation. It would be well, if thoſe that are engaged in preaching the word, and have a call from them that are judges of the truth, and may eſteem them proper perſons for ſuch a work, that they continue therein as the apoſtle Paul exhorts Timothy (*a*): *But continue thou in the things which thou haſt learned and haſt been aſſured of, knwing of whom thou haſt learned them.*

To preach the goſpel conſtantly, is to preach it at all times and ſeaſons, at all opportunities: my preaching among you ſeems almoſt over; my race is almoſt run; and conſidering theſe things, was one reaſon of my firſt thinking on this ſcripture for your entertainment.

The apoſtle exhorts Timothy to this (*b*): *Preach the word; be inſtant in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long ſuffering and doctrine*; meaning this goſpel.

Or, thus, the goſpel ſhould be preached,

(*a*) 2 Tim. iii. 14. (*b*) Ibid. iv. 2.

First,

Firſt, As the goſpel of the bleſſed God;

Second, As the goſpel of the grace of God;

Third, As the goſpel of Chriſt, who is God;

Fourth, As the goſpel of our Salvation;

Fifth, As the goſpel which is everlaſting.

1ſt, As the goſpel of the bleſſed God. God is the author of it, and it very juſtly bears that epithet: thus the apoſtle ſpeaks of it to Timothy (*a*), *According to the glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God, which was committed to my truſt:* And may be called glorious, becauſe the glory of all the divine perfections are diſplayed therein, and the glory of each divine perſon in the glorious Trinity.

And as God is the author of all the real glory of the ſaints now, and of all the glory they ſhall be brought to in the heavenly world, therefore it may well be called the glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God, as there is ſuch a radiant ſhine of divine glory through the whole.

And it is to be preached as the goſpel of the bleſſed God, who is, and will be eternally bleſſed in himſelf; and becauſe he makes his creatures bleſſed, men as well as angels: the

(*a*) 1. Tim. i. 11.

ſpirits

ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, when they were on earth, were bleſſed by him. And how will the ſaints hereafter enjoy this bleſſing, when this goſpel of the bleſſed God, his grace and mercy through Chriſt, will particularly be made known to them (*a*): *Which in his time he ſhall ſhew, who is the bleſſed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.*

2d, As the goſpel of the grace of God.—That ſhine of free favour and love, that appears to ſenſible ſinners as moſt glorious and beautiful; it was this grace of God that Paul had in his commiſſion to preach, and knew more abundantly than others (*b*); *Unto me, who am leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints, is this grace given, that I ſhould preach among the Gentiles the unſearchable riches of Chriſt.*

And the unſearchable riches of Chriſt are comprized in this goſpel of the grace of God; and if the luſtre of it appears, and ſhines with ſuch refulgency now, what will it do in the view of the ſaints hereafter, when its powerful effects will be more clearly diſcerned?

From an acquaintance with this, the apoſtle Paul valued not his own life, as he tells us,

(*a*) 1 Tim. vi. 15. (*b*) Eph. iii. 8.

when

when ſpeaking of his bonds (*a*). *But none of theſe things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myſelf, ſo that I might finiſh my courſe with joy, and the miniſtry which I have received of the Lord Jeſus, to teſtify the goſpel of the grace of God.* You ſee here, a ſhort hint, or ſpecimen, my friends, how and what it is to preach the goſpel of the grace of God. And it was the grace of God, that provided Chriſt; that laid all our help upon Chriſt; and it was the grace of God, that moved him to bleſs us with all ſpiritual bleſſings.

3d, As the goſpel of Chriſt, who is God. *In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God* (*b*). Chriſt was in the boſom of the Father from everlaſting; and the apoſtle John further adds, *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made* (*c*). How will thoſe baſe creatures, the Arians and Socinians, anſwer thoſe bleſſed paſſages concerning the deity of the Lord Jeſus, which are denied by them, though it ſhines with equal luſtre, and as clear as the deity of the Father? He that made all things, muſt be God, and pro-

(*a*) Acts xx. 24. (*b*) John i. 1. (*c*) Ibid. i. 3.

perly

perly God too. All things were made by him, Chriſt—therefore Chriſt is God.

Not only ſo, but the apoſtle further illuſtrates this bleſſed truth (*a*); *And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an underſtanding that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jeſus Chriſt; this is the true God, and eternal life.* And it is in this Lord Jeſus we believe and confide, and in him we truſt all our ſalvation.

He is not only God, but the true and everlaſting God; and therefore we are obliged to contend for his deity and perfections, as all the perfections of deity reſide in him; and the apoſtle Paul was ſo intent upon this that he tells us (*b*), *For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt.*

This ſame Lord Jeſus Chriſt, whom we have been preaching to you once more, is the true and mighty God; and great reaſon we

(*a*) 1 John v. 20. (*b*) Coloſ. i. 16, 17.

have

have to bleſs his name for this truth; alſo, from the ſame inſpired writer (*a*): *Whoſe are the Fathers, and of whom as concerning the fleſh Chriſt came, who is over all God bleſſed for evermore.*

4th, As the goſpel of our ſalvation, it is to be preached as it is therein revealed, opened, and explained in all its branches, becauſe it is our ſalvation from firſt to laſt; or our ſalvation by grace and Chriſt, is revealed there, and is included, and opened, and applied by the Spirit in the goſpel, and received by faith; and thanks and praiſes are given unto the Lord upon the account of it.

And in the goſpel, ſalvation by Chriſt is freely aſſerted; and this is good food for the faith of God's people, as the apoſtle fully declares to the Epheſians (*b*); *In whom ye alſo truſted after that ye had heard the word of truth, the goſpel of your ſalvation: in whom alſo after that ye believed, ye were ſealed with that holy ſpirit of promiſe.*

This goſpel of our ſalvation is of great concern, and as ſuch to be preached: and what is intended by the apoſtle when preaching at Antioch, when he calls it the word of this ſal-

(*a*) Rom. ix. 5. (*b*) Eph. i. 13.

vation (*a*); *Men and brethren, children of the ſtock of Abraham, and whoſoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this ſalvation ſent:* and a great, free, glorious, and ineſtimable bleſſing it is.

5th, This goſpel is to be preached as the everlaſting goſpel. It bears this epithet very juſtly now, and will not end; when time is over with us, it will be the everlaſting goſpel ſtill (*b*); *I ſaw another angel fly in the midſt of heaven, having the everlaſting goſpel, to preach unto them that dwell upon the earth, and to every nation and kindred, and tongue and people.* And though the time is haſtening when goſpel ordinances will not be needed, nor adminiſtered, as now; nor any goſpel preachers attending this ſervice; yet there will be an everlaſting goſpel. And as Paul and Barnabas, when here, preached it with great aſſiduity, it may give us ſome pleaſure and ſatisfaction to read over our text, *And there they preached the Goſpel.*

(*a*) Acts xiii. 26. (*b*) Rev. xiv. 6.

DISCOURSE III.

ACTS xiv. 7.

And there they preached the Goſpel.

WE need not apoligize for brevity, nor obſerve any thing further with reſpect to introduction to this paſſage of ſcripture, inaſmuch as we are about to take our leave of the ſubject. In doing of which, we come to conſider the laſt head of doctrine propoſed;

III. To ſhew you under what characters Paul and Barnabas preached the goſpel.

And they preached the goſpel,

Either, Firſt, As the apoſtles of Chriſt;

Or, Second, As the miniſters of Chriſt;

Or, Third, As the ambaſſadors of Chriſt;

Or, Fourth, As the brethren of Chriſt;

Or, Fifth, As the ſtewards of Chriſt.

And under theſe characters, one or all of them, Paul and Barnabas preached the goſpel:

Either, 1ſt, They preached the goſpel as the apoſtles of Chriſt; and the name of an apoſtle is a great name; a name of great dignity, of honour, power, and authority: and ſuch were the apoſtles we are ſpeaking of; who were highly honoured, and inveſted as they were with this ſhining character, and honourable appellation, the apoſtles of Chriſt, and had a conſiderable charge given them; whoſe work was to plant churches, by preaching Chriſt, which they were to obſerve with punctuality.

We don't remember in all the ſacred writings that they were deficient herein; but they attended at all times and ſeaſons, when and where the providence of God called them; even to thoſe places, to Lyſtra, and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, as there was further work and buſineſs for them to do there, and particularly Paul, in healing a man that was a cripple; upon which ſacrifice was propoſed to be done by the prieſt of Jupiter (*a*); *Then the prieſt of Jupiter, which was before their city,*

(*a*) Acts xiiv. 13, 14, 15.

brought

brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done ſacrifice with the people. Which when the apoſtles Barnbas and Paul heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out, and ſaying, Sirs, why do ye theſe things? we are men of like paſſions with you, and preach unto you that ye ſhould turn from theſe vanities unto the living God, which made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and all things that are therein.

And we find, reſpecting the apoſtle Paul, though his work and office was great, yet he had particular and ſpecial furniture for the diſcharge of the ſame; as in an extraordinary manner he was repleniſhed from the Lord: and he tells us (*a*): *Not that we are ſufficient of ourſelves to think any thing as of ourſelves; but our ſufficiency is of God;* and he ſpeaks this with great humility of mind, and then adds, *Who alſo hath made us able miniſters of the New Teſtament; not of the letter, but of the ſpirit: for the letter killeth, but the ſpirit giveth life.*

And this ſame great man of God ſays to the Corinthians (*b*) *For I ſuppoſe I was not a whit behind the very chiefeſt of the apoſtles:* and ſays

(*a*) 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6. (*b*) Ibid xi. 5. and xii. 11.

in the next chapter, *I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefeſt apoſtles, though I be nothing.*

He obſerves he was not behind them; and when he ſaid he was nothing, it can't be ſuppoſed he meant that he was a non-entity, or that he had no exiſtence, made no appearance in the world, or was nothing in the account of God: for he was ſomething in the account of all the three divine perſons, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt.

He was greatly accounted of by them all; he was in great repute among all the churches in general; moſt of them greatly reſpected him upon the account of his office, as being an eminent apoſtle of the Lord Jeſus; and, therefore, when he calls himſelf nothing, what can be meant, but when compared with the Lord? and ſo nothing in his own eyes.

So Paul and Barnabas preached the goſpel as apoſtles of Chriſt; but they are not reckoned as included, or making up the number of the twelve apoſtles: no, they are quite differently to be conceived of—Paul and Barnabas were added to the twelve apoſtles that our

Lord

Lord Jeſus ſent out, of which you have a particular account in the tenth chapter of Matthew. Paul and Barnabas were apoſtles ſent out long after them, and being added to them make the number fourteen.

And the apoſtle Paul, writing to the church at Epheſus, after his uſual ſalutation, tells them that they were (*a*) *Built upon the foundation of the apoſtles and prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner ſtone.*

And how amazingly are the twelve apoſtles ſpoken of, and characterized, and adorned, in the New-Jeruſalem ſtate: and what an honourable mention is there made of them by the Holy Ghoſt; *And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apoſtles of the Lamb.*

Properly ſpeaking, there is but one foundation; and that is Chriſt, for ſinners to build their faith and hope upon; and the goſpel knows no other; yet in a goſpel ſenſe, and as miniſterially conſidered, and as they laid Chriſt the foundation in their miniſtry, there may be ſaid to be twelve; and the wall of the city had twelve foundations.

But theſe two apoſtles, as before ſpecified,

(*a*) Eph. ii. 20.

that

that were added, were two diſtinct from the reſt; namely, Paul and Barnabas: the other twelve were ſent forth immediately by the Lord Jeſus; and theſe two by the Holy Ghoſt.

We find when the church that was at Antioch was aſſembled together (*a*), *And as they miniſtered to the Lord, and faſted, the Holy Ghoſt ſaid, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.*

The others were immediately ſent by the Lord Jeſus; and theſe two by the Holy Ghoſt. They did not only preach the goſpel as the apoſtles of Chriſt, in a lively, powerful, and ſpiritual way and manner, but they preached the goſpel as thoſe that (with the Corinthians) had been put into Chriſt by the electing grace of Jehovah the Father (*b*). *But of him are ye in Chriſt Jeſus, who of God is made unto us wiſdom, and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and redemption.* They were in Chriſt in the ſame ſenſe Paul and Barnabas and the reſt of the apoſtles and believers in Chriſt in common are.

Or, 2d, As the miniſters of Chriſt they preached the goſpel. Both in the ſame ſenſe, their work was the ſame with reſpect to

(*a*) Acts xiii. 2. (*b*) 1 Cor. i. 30.

preaching,

preaching, and as men authorized from the Lord; though their different characters are related apart, and ſo we conſider them apart. The apoſtle, in writing to the Corinthians, with reſpect to himſelf and Apollos, ſays, *Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but miniſters by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man* (*a*)?

The apoſtles were interpreters, teachers, or leaders; and what was their mercy; Paul and the other apoſtles? They did not only preach the goſpel, but they preached it with a great deal of clearneſs, ſublimity, and analogy; with goſpel power, not only as miniſters to miniſter the word, but were men of ability in defending the goſpel.

They are called able miniſters; all miniſters can't be ſaid to be able miniſters:—the apoſtle ſays (*b*), *Who alſo hath made us able miniſters of the New Teſtament; not of the letter, but of the ſpirit: for the letter killeth, but the ſpirit giveth life.*

They were perſons upon all occaſions able to defend the truth, by arguments the moſt weighty and forcible: we ſhall never have ſuch again, except in ſome meaſure (one here

(*a*) 1 Cor. iii. 5. (*b*) 2 Cor. iii. 6.

and there, who bear ſome ſemblance to them) until the latter day, when the ſpirit ſhall be poured down in a more plentiful manner than it is at this time.

The day in which we live, is a muddy, dark, and gloomy day; and the ableſt miniſters of the goſpel now, are no further inſpired to preach, but as led and directed by the written word, and that is ſufficient.

We expect no other revelation of the mind and will of God, than we have in the goſpel; and what we have received from the Lord, there is great reaſon to be thankful for; and great is the grace which appears, and is diſplayed in this glorious goſpel; and both are united together, to glorify the great author of it.

Paul accounted it one of the greateſt bleſſings to be a preacher of this goſpel (*a*): *I thank Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the miniſtry.* The apoſtles did not put themſelves therein, or intrude into this office, as many perſons do in the miniſtry now.

Or, 3d, As the ambaſſadors of Chriſt they

(*a*) 1 Tim. i. 12.

preached

preached the goſpel, and were well qualified for ſuch ſervice. They were explainers, or interpreters of the word: nay, they were meſſengers; as there are meſſengers or ambaſſadors, in a literal, as well as in a goſpel ſenſe.

So were thoſe perſons, in a very eminent manner; they were ſpiritual ambaſſadors: of this the apoſtle makes mention (*a*): *Now then we are ambaſſadors for Chriſt, as though God did beſeech you by us: we pray you in Chriſt's ſtead, Be ye reconciled to God.*

The Corinthians, by the preaching of the goſpel, were reconciled to God's way of ſaving ſinners, by Chriſt, already; and their reconciliation, and the reconciliation of all the elect, has been effected by Chriſt, who hath made peace by the blood of his croſs.

And this goſpel known and underſtood, and powerfully enjoyed, will deſtroy all that natural and innate enmity, and ſwellings of pride, that are found in men. But there is a being reconciled to God in the diſpenſations of his providence—Paul was a very eminent and wiſe ambaſſador for Chriſt, and to the Epheſians ſays (*b*), *For which I am*

(*a*) 2 Cor. v. 20. (*b*) Eph. vi. 20.

an ambaſſador in bonds: that therein I may ſpeak boldly, as I ought to ſpeak.

And 'tis evident, that an ambaſſador ſignifies a meſſenger, agreeable to that paſſage (*a*), *For the prieſt's lips ſhould keep knowledge, and they ſhould ſeek the law at his mouth: for he is the meſſenger of the Lord of hoſts.*

Or, 4th, As the brethren of Chriſt, they preached the goſpel. Having one God and Father, and as brethren, they were in near relation to Chriſt: they were owned by him in this relation; they were partakers of the ſame nature, and partakers of the divine nature; and their miniſtrations ſhone forth abundantly.

And to be Chriſt's brethren, what a mercy and privilege is this? a mercy that can never be purchaſed by all the riches of this world. Though it is not all men in the miniſtry that are brethren to Chriſt;—but every true miniſter is a brother to him, and will be owned by him hereafter: they ſtand in relation to him as ſuch, and he will own his brethren, as they are his ſpiritual kindred.

When our Lord Jeſus was riſen from the

(*a*) Mal. ii. 7.

dead,

dead, and Mary Magdalen had been ſeeking him at the ſepulchre with tears, he ſays to her (*a*), *Touch me not, for I am not yet aſcended to my father; but go to my brethren, and ſay unto them, I aſcend unto my father, and your father, and to my God, and to your God.*

'Tis worthy of our notice from this ſcripture, where Mary is forbidden to touch her Lord, what an unſpeakable mercy it is, that the greateſt, neareſt, and ſweeteſt embraces between Chriſt and his people, are deſigned for the heavenly ſtate: well, theſe were the brethren of Chriſt, in an eminent ſenſe; yet 'tis moſt certain, from the ſacred ſcriptures, that all regenerate, heaven-born ſouls, may be conſidered in this relation of brethren to Chriſt, though not miniſters of the word; but more eſpecially ſuch perſons that we have been ſpeaking of: they preached the goſpel as brethren that were fore-known by the Lord, as others are (*b*), *For whom he did fore-know, he alſo did predeſtinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firſt-born among many brethren.*

(*a*) John xx. 17. (*b*) Rom. viii. 29.

Chriſt

Chriſt is the firſt-born, and he owns his brethren(*a*); *I will declare thy name,* as he ſays to his Divine Father, *unto my brethren; for both he that ſanctifieth, and they who are ſanctified, are all of one; for which cauſe he is not aſhamed to call them brethren.* And the apoſtle Paul, writing to the Corinthians, and ſpeaking of brethren, ſeems to deſign miniſters of the word, who for their work ſake are ſo called(*b*): *Or our brethren be enquired of; they are the meſſengers of the churches, and the glory of Chriſt.*

Or, 5th, As the ſtewards of Chriſt, Paul and Barnabas preached the goſpel. And they had treaſure, rich treaſure, committed unto them, and put into their hands; and they had a large ſtock put into their hearts: they were intruſted with the goſpel; and the goſpel is of the greateſt account, of the greateſt worth, of the greateſt moment, of the greateſt excellency; all the ſuppoſed excellencies of this world, when weighed in the balance with Chriſt and his goſpel, are lighter than a feather: this the apoſtle Paul well knew; and, ſpeaking of himſelf and others, ſays(*c*) *Let a*

(*a*) Heb. ii. 11, 12. (*b*) 2 Cor. viii. 23. (*c*) 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2.

man

man ſo account of us, as of the miniſters of Chriſt, and ſtewards of the myſteries of God: moreover, it is required in ſtewards that a man be found faithful. Theſe were conſidered as preachers of the goſpel; and as ſtewards, the goſpel was given unto them; they had a ſpiritual underſtanding of it; they knew it in its purity, glory, beauty, and excellencies, and in the power and influence of it; and as ſuch they preached it; as very well they might; as being men particularly taught of the Lord. And as they preached the goſpel, ſo they lived the goſpel: and thoſe that are intruſted with ſuch a charge, if they think aright, muſt needs think that no greater charge under heaven can men be intruſted with, than the treaſure of the goſpel. And our Lord Jeſus, in anſwer to Peter, thus delivers himſelf (*a*): *And the Lord ſaid, Who then is that faithful and wiſe ſteward, whom his Lord ſhall make ruler over his houſhold, to give them their portion of meat in due ſeaſon?* It is the buſineſs of ſpiritual ſtewards, miniſters of the goſpel, ſo to do; and then they may be ſaid to divide the word of truth aright, in their miniſtrations, as ſuggeſted by our Lord: and

(*a*) Luke xii. 42.

then

then theſe things, when well adjuſted with other parts, of the ſacred writings, will be known to be undoubted truths. And that ſo it was Paul and Barnabas preached the goſpel to their audience, I think may be readily granted.

Or, thus, they preached the goſpel;

I. As the ſervants of Chriſt;

II. As the friends of Chriſt;

III. As the diſciples of Chriſt;

IV. As the ſhepherds and overſeers of Chriſt.

1ſt, As the ſervants of Chriſt: they ſerved the Lord Chriſt, they preached his goſpel as his ſervants; and they were his free, chearful, willing, and obedient ſervants; and their ſervice was accepted of the Lord, and by him owned abundantly, though they were oppoſed often in their work: and true it was that was ſpoken by the damſel that brought her maſters much gain by ſoothſaying(*a*); *The ſame followed Paul and us, and cried, ſaying, Theſe men are the ſervants of the moſt high God, which ſhew unto us the way of ſalvation.*

This, however deſigned, when ſpoken, was

(*a*) Acts xvi. 17.

certain;

certain; and ſhe never ſpake any thing more true. They had learned the way of ſalvation themſelves, and therefore ſhewed it to others. And though ſhe might ſpeak at random, it was an eternal goſpel truth; for they were eminent ſervants of the Lord Jeſus, as Paul and Barnabas were: and as for the apoſtle Paul, he thus ſtiles himſelf(*a*): *Paul, a ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, called to be an apoſtle, ſeparated unto the goſpel of God.* And the ſame apoſtle was a man of extraordinary talents, of great gifts, and eminently uſeful to the churches of Chriſt; and more ſo, it may be, than any man ever was, or any are like to be, except in the latter-day glory. And this bleſſed apoſtle, with reſpect to his ſervice in the Redeemer's intereſt, ſays(*b*), *For God is my witneſs, whom I ſerve with my ſpirit in the goſpel of his Son, that without ceaſing I make mention of you always in my prayers.*

Or, 2d, As the friends of Chriſt. The Lord Jeſus hath but few, when compared with them of the oppoſite ſide, even among miniſters; the bulk of whom are either ſecret, or open and avowed enemies, who run down the ſacred truths of the goſpel with jeer,

(*a*) Rom. i. 1. (*b*) Ibid. i. 9.

ſneer, banter, and ridicule; whoſe end will be, if victorious grace prevents not, moſt awful and tremendous.

But Paul and Barnabas preached the goſpel as cordial friends to our Lord and Redeemer, and that with godly ſincerity: and we know, from our own obſervation, that all preachers are not friends, becauſe ſome unconverted men have been miniſters, and are called ſo, that were never regenerated; and it may be they never may; and crowds of them that never were ſubjects of divine grace: and 'tis to be feared that numbers will be found of this complexion, that paſs for miniſters among men, that were never real friends to Chriſt, that never had a ſpiritual knowledge of him: they were not good friends, they were not ſtaunch friends, as Paul and Barnabas were; they did not abide by the truth as friends, did not defend it as our apoſtles did. And to be eſteemed a friend by the Lord Jeſus, the omniſcient God, what an honour is this?

Every true believer is a friend, and every ſuch friend loves the Lord Jeſus in ſincerity: but theſe, being apoſtles, had greater advantage and opportunity of diſcovering their friendſhip, affection, and love, to the Lord Jeſus:

Jeſus: and he tells his diſciples(*a*), *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends: ye are my friends, if ye do whatſoever I command you: henceforth I call you not ſervants; for the ſervant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.* And our Lord Jeſus is ſpeaking in this paſſage now to us, as though he was perſonally preſent: and how lovingly does he ſpeak to his diſciples elſewhere(*b*): *And I ſay unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.* He calls them friends:—this is matchleſs, and wonderful! Sweet entertainment for the ſaints! And a bleſſed appellation this is. What a ſpecial friend muſt Chriſt be, to ſpeak ſuch language to creatures, ſuch as we are, who are deſerving of everlaſting deſtruction!

Or, 3d, As the diſciples of Chriſt. Paul and Barnabas were ſuch, though in a higher ſenſe than common believers now. And the twelve apoſtles of Chriſt are called his diſci-

(*a*) John xv. 13, 14, 15. (*b*) Luke xii. 4.

ples (*a*): *And when he had called unto him his twelve diſciples, he gave them power againſt unclean ſpirits, to caſt them out, and to heal all manner of ſickneſs, and all manner of diſeaſe;* and this privilege of diſcipleſhip, which is an honour and bleſſing, Paul and Barnabas enjoyed and were favoured with, as they were true and real followers of Chriſt, and preachers of his goſpel: which is not only conſiſtent with, but agreeable to their characters, as believers, and preachers; and conſiſtent with their work and office, and the nature of true grace.

And though they were men of great abilities, gifts, and high attainments, they were not above being eſteemed by others as the ſcholars and learners of Chriſt; who hath taught his diſciples to expect tribulation, and the croſs, in this world (*b*): *Then ſaid Jeſus unto his diſciples, if any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and follow me.*

Or, 4th, Paul and Barnabas preached the goſpel, as the ſhepherds and overſeers of Chriſt. Characters which properly belong

(*a*) Mat. x. 1. (*b*) Ibid. xvi. 24.

to

to none but ſuch who are in the favour of Chriſt; and are gifted by him, and have a ſpiritual diſcernment of perſons and things; and that can inſpect the affairs of Chriſt's houſe.

No men are capable of diſcharging this ſacred function, or office, aright, but ſuch that are quickened by ſpecial grace, and are made light in the Lord themſelves; and can ſavour of the things of the ſpirit; and know ſomething of a divine change; and have ſome concern for the glory of God, and the honour of Chriſt, and the bleſſed Spirit; and for the good of ſouls; and for the edifying of the body of Chriſt; and for building of them up in faith and holineſs; and that love the Lord Jeſus, and his intereſt. And thoſe that are the beſt qualified for this, are to remember, that they are but under ſhepherds, and are accountable to Chriſt, the chief ſhepherd.

And the apoſtle Peter who was an elder, when exhorting the elders to do their duty, and to encourage them thereunto, tells them (*a*), *And when the chief ſhepherd ſhall*

(*a*) 1. Pet. v. 4. (*b*) Acts xx. 23.

appear,

appear, ye ſhall receive a crown of glory, that fadeth not away.

And how ſeaſonable was this counſel and advice, given by the apoſtle to the elders, before ſpecified? And how careful was the apoſtle Paul to inculcate this, when from Miletus he ſent to Epheſus, and called the elders of the church (*a*)? *Take heed therefore unto yourſelves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you overſeers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchaſed with his own blood.*

All this ſhews, how needful theſe characters were in the churches of Chriſt; and the aſſiduous diſcharge of their office. And after our Lord Jeſus had interrogated Peter, the third time, with reſpect to his love to him, and Peter had cordially, and ingenuouſly anſwered his Lord and maſter, he gave him this charge (*b*): *Jeſus ſaith unto him, feed my ſheep.*

Or, thus, Paul and Barnabas preached the goſpel;

I. As the watchmen of Chriſt;

II. As the ſtars of Chriſt;

III. As the ſheep, and ſent, of Chriſt;

(*a*) Acts xx. 28. (*b*). John xxi. 16.

IV. As

IV. As the ſalt and ſavour of the earth.

1ſt, They preached the goſpel as the watchmen of Chriſt;—that he gave orders and inſtructions to, to be obſerved by them, and of which they gave notice; and that acquainted the churches what appeared to be the preſent poſture of affairs relating to the kingdom of Chriſt, and the corrupt day in which they then lived, and how much it became them to be upon their guard; and that acquainted them (the people of God) of thoſe dangerous enemies that were making their approach towards them; as it became good watchmen to do, when they deſcry an enemy; and expoſe the errors and tenets that were abroad; as all obſerving and faithful watchmen ought to do: and thus they watched over thoſe committed to their care, that they did not embrace ſoul-deſtroying and damnable hereſies, ſuch as the Arians and Socinians, and others, who deny Chriſt's ſatisfaction as perfect, full, and expiatory for ſin; and other corrupt doctrines, as held and maintained by them.

The author of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews, ſuppoſed to be the apoſtle Paul, I mean as the writer, when writing to the church, ſays thus:

thus(a): *Obey them that have the rule over you, and ſubmit yourſelves, for they watch for your ſouls, as they that muſt give account; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.*

Spiritual watchmen deſign the good and profit of the ſouls they watch over, leſt any root of bitterneſs ſpring up among them; and obſerve that their people are perſons that abide ſtedfaſt in the faith, and ſtand by the faithful words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the doctrines, according to godlineſs; that is, according to the knowledge, mind, and will of God; and that peace and ſpiritual proſperity might be promoted among them.

And ſuch watchmen as Paul and Barnabas exhort believers *to cleave to the Lord Chriſt, and all his doctrines, with purpoſe of heart*(b): and they proclaim theſe things openly, and declare the eternal reſolutions of God, in chooſing his elect, and putting them into the hands of Jeſus Chriſt, by electing grace.

And the prophet Iſaiah, ſpeaking of watchmen, ſpeaks of this act of God(c): *I have ſet watchmen upon thy walls, O Jeruſalem, which*

(a) Heb. xiii. 17. (b) Acts xi. 23. (c) Iſaiah lxii. 6.

ſhall

ſhall never hold their peace day nor night; ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not ſilence: or that they obſerve that the doctrines of Chriſt, his grace, and goſpel, be not ſlighted.

2dly, Paul and Barnabas preached the goſpel as the ſtars of Chriſt; and they were ſtars of the firſt magnitude; and they will ſhine in the firmament of God's everlaſting love for ever: it is therefore that the angels, or miniſters, of the ſeven churches of Aſia, are called by this character, of ſtars, when John ſaw Chriſt in viſion (*a*): *And he had in his right hand ſeven ſtars; and out of his mouth went a ſharp two-edged ſword; and his countenance was as the ſun ſhineth in his ſtrength.* And in the ſame chapter (*b*); *The myſtery of the ſeven ſtars which thou ſaweſt in my right hand, and the ſeven golden candleſticks; the ſeven ſtars are the angels of the ſeven churches, and the ſeven candleſticks which thou ſaweſt are the ſeven churches.* And again the revelator thus obſerves (*c*): *Unto the angel of the church of Epheſus, write theſe things, ſaith he that holdeth the ſeven ſtars in his right hand,*

(*a*) Rev. i. 16. (*b*) Ibid. 20. (*c*) Ibid. ii. 1.

who walketh in the midſt of the ſeven golden candleſticks. As ſtars they emitted light to others, and ſpread goſpel light by preaching the pure and clear doctrines of the goſpel. And what a comfortable encouragement to every godly goſpel-miniſter of Jeſus Chriſt, to all thoſe that have been put into the miniſtry by him, and will be owned of him, and acknowledged by him, as his, to think how they will ſhine in that great day of the Lord, that Daniel ſo particularly ſpeaks of, and which he avers, with great awe and ſolemnity (*a*): *And they that be wiſe ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteouſneſs, as the ſtars, for ever and ever.*

3d, Paul and Barnabas preached the goſpel as the ſheep, and ſent, of Chriſt; they were the ſheep of Chriſt, before they were put into that office, as the other apoſtles were: nothing poſſible could prevent that; nor could any thing now eradicate that grace that was manifeſted unto them, and in them; by which it was evident they were ſheep and apoſtles too; and that had been beſtowed upon them in a gracious and wonderful way.

(*a*) Daniel xii. 3.

The

The former twelve apoſtles were bleſſed with the ſame grace, and fitted and qualified for their work and office, by the ſame ſpirit. We might give you an enumeration of ſcriptures to prove this, but let this ſuffice (*a*): *Behold I ſend you forth as ſheep in the midſt of wolves; be ye therefore wiſe as ſerpents, and harmleſs as doves.*

And as our Lord Jeſus, who was that great ſhepherd of all his ſheep, from firſt to laſt, ſaid to his diſciples, after he was riſen from the dead (*b*), *Then ſaid Jeſus unto them again, peace unto you; as my Father hath ſent me, even ſo ſend I you:* this makes good what we ſaid before, that they preached the goſpel as ſheep, and ſent, of Chriſt.

4th, and laſtly, Paul and Barnabas preached the goſpel as the ſalt and ſavour of the earth: Nothing is taken notice of in particular, but perſons under this character, by the Lord: the unregenerate world, and ſo the world that lies in wickedneſs, are of no account with him, and unſavoury things in his eſteem: all the world of the wicked and ungodly, taken together, are but as chaff which the wind driveth away.

And as this ſalt of the earth, ſpoken of by

(*a*) Mat. x. 16. (*b*) John xx.. 21.

our Lord, refers to the firſt apoſtles, as well as to the people of Chriſt in general, as our Lord ſays in his ſermon (*a*), *Ye are the ſalt of the earth: but if the ſalt have loſt his ſavour, wherewith ſhall it be ſalted: it is henceforth good for nothing, but to be caſt out, and to be trodden under foot of men.* The ſalt of the earth, as the apoſtles and diſciples of Chriſt were, keeps it from corrupting and periſhing: thus things appear in the view of the ſaints, and the people of God. When they act in their ſeveral ſtations, conſiſtent with their character and the word of God, and have their converſation in heaven, they manifeſtly declare they are the ſalt of the earth, and miniſters of the goſpel alſo.

Wherever they preach, they anſwer the end and deſign of the Holy Ghoſt, as the apoſtles of our Lord did. And the apoſtle Paul when writing to the Corinthians, confirms this truth (*a*), *Now thanks be unto God, which always cauſeth us to triumph in Chriſt, and maketh manifeſt the ſavour of his knowledge by us in every place. For we are unto God a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt in them that are ſaved, and in them that periſh: To the one we are the ſavour of death*

(*a*) Mat. v. 13. (*b*) 2 Cor. ii. 14, 15, 16.

unto

unto death, and to the other the ſavour of life unto life; and who is ſufficient for theſe things? And this laſt clauſe, and who is ſufficient for theſe things? may hide pride from men who have the greateſt gifts and endowments whatever.

And here every humble, every true miniſter of the goſpel, will ſee occaſion, either before he attempts to preach (if his mind is deeply impreſſed with the nature of it), or when he hath compleated his preaching, to conſider the nature and importance of ſuch a work, and ſay with the apoſtle, And who is ſufficient for theſe things?

Thus, my friends, I have briefly finiſhed my thoughts upon the ſubject, not inſenſible of my own meanneſs, and imperfections; and we may ruminate upon the ſubſtance and ſubject matter of theſe things, in our own houſes; and if the Lord is glorified, Chriſt exalted, and believers comforted and edified, and free grace and Chriſt in the goſpel admired, and cordially received, I truſt my end in ſubmitting to its publication is anſwered, while we yet diſcern ſome peculiar beauties in the text,

And there they preached the Goſpel.

BRITISH
10 OC 94
MUSEUM